



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kirsten Yates
KYates@Chattanooga.gov
423.643.7800

CONTACT: Robin Derryberry
Robin@DerryberryPR.com
423.755.7588

CHATTANOOGA CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS WESTSIDE COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION PLAN

City provides an additional \$1 million to support the renovation of the historic James A. Henry school, helping jumpstart the transformative affordable housing initiative

Chattanooga, Tenn. (November 1, 2022) — The Chattanooga City Council tonight adopted the [Westside Evolves Plan](#), which provides a ten-year strategy for change in the city's oldest public housing community. The plan was developed over a two-year period with more than 82 percent of the area's 4500 residents participating in the process.

In further support of the plan, City Council also voted to approve an interlocal agreement that will allow the City to provide \$1 million from its affordable housing fund to support the renovation of the historic James A. Henry school. The school will serve as the Westside's new neighborhood hub, anchored by a 100-seat Head Start facility. The funding is in addition to the \$2 million in federal [American Rescue Plan funds](#) the City already invested in the renovation, for a total commitment of \$3 million.

"Chattanooga's Westside is one of our most historic neighborhoods, home to over five generations of our residents," said Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly. "The Westside Evolves plan will ensure this critical part of our city is revitalized in a way that will support the growth and prosperity of future generations, all without displacing the existing community. This is exactly the kind of thoughtful planning we need to further our vision for One Chattanooga, and I'm grateful to City Council for supporting this transformative initiative for our city."

"This is a great example of the partnerships built among government and the private sector to support community efforts," said City Council Chairman Darrin Ledford. "It's an exciting time for Chattanooga's oldest public community and while there's a great deal of work to be done, I'm glad the City Council has been able to play a critical role in providing a strong foundation for the efforts to come."

Westside Evolves is a collaborative neighborhood planning initiative among the Chattanooga Design Studio, the Chattanooga Housing Authority (CHA) and the City of Chattanooga. In addition to the funding provided by the City, U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann secured a \$3 million federal appropriation for the project, and Hamilton County invested an additional \$2 million in

American Rescue Plan funds. The money will be used to leverage additional dollars to fully fund the project, at an estimated total cost of \$1 billion over the next ten years.

“Thanks to deep collaboration between the community, the Chattanooga Housing Authority, the City, and other stakeholders, we now have an accountable and transparent plan to revitalize our beloved Westside, opening up opportunity and quality affordable housing that will uplift the community for years to come,” said Councilwoman Raquetta Dotley, whose district includes the Westside neighborhood.

Adoption of the plan launches an official partnership between the city and CHA, in which both will leverage the plan as the official strategy for revitalizing the historic neighborhood. With a one-for-one replacement of housing for the 629 families living in the Westside, the plan includes replacement, work force, and market rate housing during each phase of development.

The plan encompasses the area known as the Westside District, which is bordered by Martin Luther King Boulevard, Riverfront Parkway, Main Street and I-27. While residents of College Hill Courts may be relocated during future construction, all lease compliant residents will have the right to return to a new unit in the Westside neighborhood. CHA residents will continue to pay 30 percent of their adjusted income towards rent at any redeveloped property.

CHA executive director Betsy McCright said, “Few planning projects begin in the midst of a pandemic and even fewer are successful. Our residents wanted a voice in the future of their community and their diligence is coming to fruition with adoption of the plan by the City of Chattanooga.”

Chattanooga Design Center executive director Eric Meyers noted, “Chattanooga Design Studio is grateful for the City Council’s support of the efforts of the residents, artists, institutions and planning partners who all worked together to craft a shared vision for the future of the Westside.

Each phase of the project will seek to employ local residents in construction jobs to support the development. Through an agreement with the AGC of East Tennessee, Westside students attending the Howard School have a unique opportunity to obtain professional training through the AGC’s construction career academy. As they graduate, the students will be able to obtain jobs to work on the construction projects within the Westside, helping end generational poverty in the area.

NEXT STEPS

With official adoption of the Westside Evolves Plan by City Council, CHA will move forward with plans to begin renovation of the James A. Henry school. The Head Start program currently located in the City’s Youth and Family Development building will ultimately move to the renovated school, which will include space for 100 early learnings seats—40 more than the YFD building holds now. In addition to serving as a Head Start facility, the school will also function as a hub for community gatherings and community-building activities.

The CHA team is also working to prepare an application in the next upcoming funding cycle for a [HUD Choice Neighborhoods grant](#). The team anticipates that the grant will be submitted for consideration in early 2023. If selected, the grant will provide a three-to-one match to assist in funding the project which will provide up to \$150 million.

Over the coming months, the team will begin to gather additional funding for the project from various entities. They will also continue their strong communication efforts within the community. The long-term vision is to transform the neighborhood into a community that is thriving, promotes resident pride and unity among neighbors, and is integrated into the surrounding area. The vision of the plan is to create a healthy and sustainable community that provides long-term physical, social, and economic benefits for all residents.

About the Chattanooga Design Studio

The Chattanooga Design Studio is an independent, non-profit community resource that promotes excellence in urban design through education, facilitation, and collaboration. The Studio is governed by a twelve-member Board of Directors, and operated by a full-time staff of three. The work of the Studio takes many forms: studies, charrettes and exhibitions for the general public; programs for the professional design community; facilitation for community stakeholders; consultation with the development community; and resources for local government. www.chattanoogaastudio.com

About the Chattanooga Housing Authority

The Chattanooga Housing Authority, chartered in 1938 pursuant to the Tennessee Housing Authorities Law, is a public body and a body corporate and politic, that offers affordable housing opportunities through its Low Income Public Housing Program in Chattanooga and the Housing Choice Voucher Program throughout Hamilton County. To learn more about the CHA, visit www.chahousing.org. You can also follow the CHA on Twitter @Chatt_Housing or like them on Facebook at fb.com/CHAHousingAuthority.

###